

compelled to write you about the fast-eroding minimum wage and its impact on the working people of our State. I respectfully request that you permit the House of Representatives to vote on increasing the minimum wage, without attaching highly controversial riders that would only sabotage the proposed 90 cent increase.

It is my understanding, from numerous press reports, that you may schedule a vote to increase the minimum wage. However, I am dismayed to learn that you intend to attach numerous other provisions which would weaken worker protections and increase the deficit. I fail to see the purpose of undermining occupational safety and health standards and/or including tax cuts without offsets, when it is the tragically low minimum wage that needs to be addressed.

The false link you are creating between a minimum wage increase and a reduction in worker protections, is little more than a cynical ploy to convince people earning \$8,400 a year that less safe working conditions are the price they must pay for a living wage. This Machiavellian approach is insensitive to the needs of thousands of working Georgians who struggle just to put food on the table.

As of 1994, 11.9% of Georgia's workforce was earning between \$4.25 and \$5.14 an hour. A 90 cent increase would help these nearly 362,000 people make ends meet. I have heard arguments from Republican leaders that raising the minimum wage would reduce jobs. However, numerous studies have shown little to no job loss when the minimum wage was raised—in some cases the number of jobs have increased. Moreover, an eminent group of 101 economists, including three Nobel Prize laureates, recently endorsed an increase in the federal minimum wage.

On behalf of working Georgians earning the minimum wage, I urge you to bring a clean minimum wage increase up for a vote on the floor of the House before the Memorial Day district work period.

Sincerely,

CYNTHIA MCKINNEY,
Member of Congress

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE END OF A LONG BUDGET PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it has been a very, very, very long journey. Last fall, in October 1995, this House was to have passed all of its appropriation bills so that the schools would be open, so that the environmental commitment we have made to the American people would be followed through, so that the homeless could be housed, and so, for example, this Government would not have closed during Thanksgiving and the Christmas holiday season of 1995.

But there is something to persistence. And although I abhorred the closing of the Government and the hurting of American families, and asked to

stay through the Thanksgiving holidays and Christmas holidays so we would not shut the Government down, unfortunately, there are others, my Republican colleagues, who saw fit not to agree, that the American people wanted a commitment to education, the environment, to safe and drug free schools, the 100,000 police officers, and the Summer Jobs Program.

But, again, as I said, it has been a long journey, but there is something to persistence, and this debate that we have had on the omnibus appropriation bill should be chronicled in the appropriate manner, and that manner is to let you know that this was not an easy task. It was not an easy task to come from zero on the Summer Jobs Program, under allegations that all we were doing was just babysitting for youngsters who work and for the first time in their lives would have the opportunity to be exposed to good jobs, to understand what the working world is all about, and to develop the self-esteem and character building aspects of their lives so they would go into the work force. Just a few months ago that program was zeroed out.

There are colleagues like myself and the Democratic Caucus who persisted that our young people do count, and the Senate heard us, and the President heard us. And from a zero funding for summer youth employment, that would have cost the city of Houston some 6,000 summer jobs for youngsters, who use those moneys to in fact pay the rent and provide clothing and substance for their families during the summer months, and encourage them to return back to their schools in the fall.

I know that program, for I had a young lady work for me during the summer, a hot summer in Houston, who called the office first and said, "I can't take this job. I can't come in." When we inquired, she said, "I have no clothes to wear." We entreated her to say, "If you have simply a paper bag to wear, it is important for you to come and understand what work is all about."

That is what America is about. And this appropriations bill that we have passed, with the good help of those who believe in our young people, now has \$625 million for our summer jobs.

Let me express the gratification for those conferees, those Democrats who persisted, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] who persisted continuously to insist that education is an important aspect of the lives of Americans. That is why title I was funded. That is why 88 percent of the education needs were funded. That is why the School to Work Program that has been applauded nationally by those individuals who applaud public schools and those who are detractors of public schools, every one of them believe in the School to Work Program, which allows young people to come out of high school and find an opportunity for work.

You know, we are always hearing accusations that Americans do not want to work, that they are slow in working, that they are not productive. And everywhere I have gone in the 18th Congressional District, they have reinforced the desire to work. But if they cannot find jobs or opportunity, or if someone says you have to go to college, that is the only way you can get to work, to support a family, then what do you have? The School to Work Program, a vital aspect of connecting Americans, high school graduates, to an effective work situation so they can be supported and independent Americans. That program was funded under this appropriation bill, because the Democrats continued to hold out to invest in America.

How grateful I am as a former city council member we continued to hold out, to see that 100,000 police officers get on our streets. You know, this is Victims Rights Week. It is tragic to be able to have to come and comfort the families of victims, families who have asked the question, why? Were they not in the right place? Were there not enough law enforcement, enough prisons?

Even when you talk to those families, they begin to understand that prevention is 9/10ths of it, and the presence of law enforcement on our streets is the other aspect of ensuring that people are not subject to criminal activity. And yet that program was not funded by Republicans.

□ 1714

I will simply say, Mr. Speaker, that we have an omnibus appropriations bill that I wish could have been passed a couple months ago, but we now have police on the street, summer jobs, and education funding.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. KLINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KLINK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]